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A B R I E F  
R E P L Y  
T O T H E S E V E R A L  
O B J E C T I O N S

*Which have been lately handed about in Manuscript by the  
Opposers of the Worcester Canal.*

I. **I**T is asserted, that it was *proved* in the Committee of the House of Commons, by witnesses whose testimony stands uncontradicted, that the mill and landed property would sustain a great and manifest injury by this new undertaking.

*Answ.* THESE witnesses, by endeavouring to prove too much, rendered their evidence so obviously absurd, that their deposition received no credit at all, and was, upon that very account, after mature deliberation, rejected with contempt. They *proved* that the *Staffordshire Canal*, and the river *Severn*, afforded a *nearer, cheaper, and better* conveyance for goods than the intended Canal could possibly procure. If this were true, the present undertaking could not in any manner affect their interests; for it is beyond doubt, that the Public will always give a decided preference to that conveyance which

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they find *nearest, shortest, and best*. The palpable contradictions of the evidence produced, and the efforts that are made to prevent the new Canal from taking place, are the strongest proof that the opposers of the *Worcester Canal* are, themselves, but too well convinced that the public will give it, when executed, the preference it deserves.

MILL Property cannot be injured by this undertaking, because the springs and streams are most effectually secured by the Act, to those who claim a prior title to them. Vague and indeterminate declamation can only mislead those who are willing to be deceived; and the bare inspection of the Act suffices to overset this plausible objection.

WITH regard to Mr. *Watson*, in particular, who has affected to tell a most woeful tale of distress, and by appealing to the feelings of the generous and humane, has insidiously endeavoured to interest them in his favour, it must be noticed, *First*, That he is a Proprietor in the *Staffordshire Canal*, and therefore must naturally be supposed to decry every improvement, from views of personal advantage. *Secondly*, That the patent of Mr. *Arkwright*, under which he works, having been set aside by a legal determination, he may, not unlikely, be conscious that he is engaged in a very precarious scheme, and would, upon that account, be happy to exonerate himself, by laying the expences of his imprudent undertaking upon the Proprietors of the new Canal. *Thirdly*, That he has a lease of his premises only for twenty-one years, part of which already is expired; and that his landlord was an hearty supporter of the *Worcester Canal*. *Fourthly*, That it appears from unquestionable evidence, that although he has taken into his mill-pond near five acres of land, yet his works have still been flooded, and sometimes thereby greatly damaged. *Fifthly*, That he has diverted into his own pond the stream of water called the *Mill Brook*, which before was wont to supply other works, to their no small detriment and injury.

As to the Landed Property, this must certainly be greatly benefited by the *Worcester Canal*: for, in its course of twenty-five miles, it passes through a country which is destitute of water-carriage; and will consequently afford a most useful conveyance



conveyance for coal, lime, and every other kind of merchandise that can be wanting.

II. It is objected, that the Company have power to take their line wherever they will, even through the estates and property of such whose consent has never been procured nor even applied for.

*Answ.* THE plan annexed to the Petition suffices to shew how unsupported this fiction is. Each field or piece of land through which the Canal is designed to pass, is there distinctly specified, with references to a book in which the name and residence, both of the proprietors and tenants of such lands, are accurately set down: And in such acts it is ever a standing rule, that the undertakers of any navigable Canal are not to deviate from the plan which was presented, more than sixty yards on either side of their line, without the consent of the proprietors of such lands through which they mean to pass, previously obtained in writing. Since the accession of his present Majesty, sixteen different Canal Acts have received the Royal Assent; and it does not appear that in any one of these several Acts such ample protection has been granted and secured to the landed property and the mill-owners as in the present instance.

III. It is said, that the Bill is calculated to serve the private views of a few individuals, without any advantage to the Public.

*Answ.* THE advantages that it is likely to be of to the Public at large, have been sufficiently detailed in the two Pamphlets handed about to the several Members of the House of Commons, and submitted to their Consideration. They have already been deemed so *manifest*, by a most respectable Committee of the whole House, that after the most minute investigation, the Bill for carrying it into execution was by them ordered to be presented to the House of Lords. Indeed, the papers which have been industriously circulated by the Opposers of this Canal, are a most insolent libel upon the House at large, as they have not scrupled therein to tax the Members of it with determining *contrary to evidence*,  
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and, at last, passing a Bill *proved* to be oppressive and unjust. Such is the *respectful* language of passion and disappointment. And, whereas this undertaking has been called a *Job* of a few individuals, it appears that it was brought forward by the hearty concurrence of *Every Nobleman* in the county through which it mostly passes; and is supported with the almost unanimous approbation of every person of rank and property in it. This alone suffices to stamp upon the Petition a character of respectability, which the complaints of its interested opponents can never do away. Would no less than five and twenty several Petitions have been offered from various cities and places in its favour?—Would the Nobility and Gentry through whose estates it is to pass, have given their consent, and *solicited* the passing of the Bill, unless they were fully convinced of the advantages it holds forth?—Will it be credited that any better or more disinterested judges can be found to determine how far it is likely to benefit or to injure the public, than those who are resident on the spot, and who of all others, are most likely to be affected by the consequences of it?

IV. IT has been urged, that the powers granted to the Petitioners for making their reservoirs and feeders are so extensive, as to enable them to do, with impunity, whatever injury they please, to the property of individuals.

*Answ.* THE various restrictive clauses inserted in the Bill, are an evident proof of the falshood of this charge. Private Property is ever, in some degree, expected to give way to Public Good. It is an invariable maxim. But, in the present case, so far are the clauses of it from granting any extraordinary or unprecedented powers, that they are *more in number*, and the limitations and exceptions in favour of individuals greater, than in any former Bill of similar nature. In other Acts, the Petitioners have generally obtained the liberty to take their water from streams and brooks at large: in this, they are almost wholly restrained to land floods and rain, and water that would otherwise run to waste. Never were the alarms of individuals treated with a like tenderness, or was a similar respect shewn even to their most groundless fears! Be this said, because we are willing to give these individuals credit



credit for the most laudable motives ; whereas the greatest part by far of the opposition which still continues to be made, seems to come from a few persons without name or property, who have been instigated by various means to subscribe *their mark* to Complaints and scare-crow fears, which, of themselves, they never would have thought of ; and to *Petitions* which they can neither read nor comprehend. They must be sensible, that the several rivers, streams, brooks and springs, which now visibly supply their mills, are fully secured to them by the most express reservations.—But they wish, one would imagine, to monopolize the very dew of Heaven ; for, little more than this has been the summit of our wishes, in our Address to Parliament.

V. IT has even been insinuated, and urged against the Petitioners, that they might have chosen a better line !

*Answ.* THIS being a matter of *Opinion* only, is, in the present stage of the Bill, but nugatory declamation. Had they themselves considered it in any other light, it would have been produced before.

VI. From the same friendly regard for the interests of the new concern, it has been asserted, that the projected Canal can never possibly succeed for want of water.

*Answ.* THIS is a consideration which, it ought to be supposed, the undertakers of it have already duly weighed. The quantity of water requisite for the annual consumption of the intended Canal, appears, by a fair estimate, every circumstance considered, to be about 2,219,904 tons. Now, it is a fact that, independently of every other supply, (and exclusive of what may be again thrown back by engines, if required) the quantity of water that falls in rain and snow upon the surface of six miles square, which lies above the summit, will alone amount annually to 8,788,832 tons, or 6,568,928 tons more than will be wanted : and that, supposing only a *third part* of this to be collected for the use of the Canal, there will yet be a surplus of ballance in its favour, of more than *seven hundred thousand tons* beyond the requisite consumption.

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VI. The Committee of the House of Commons, it is now objected, *hurried through the Petition when presented*, and gave their assent to every part of it, without any attention to the *detail* of the case, merely from a *general* view of the whole.

*Answ.* THE direct contrary appears to be the real fact. Every part of the Petition and Bill was subjected to the strictest scrutiny, in the presence of its most avowed opponents. It was corrected, altered, and amended, by the Committee with unusual care. And although they may seem to have paid but little attention to such parts of the *evidence* (as it is called) which was produced against it, as were notoriously contradictory and absurd; yet they patiently heard as much of it as was judged of any importance. The Bill was, by their special order, modelled into its present form, and not approved, till every objection had been attended to, and, in their eyes and judgment, most satisfactorily removed. As it was so thoroughly investigated in the Lower House, the Promoters of this useful undertaking are sorry to see that the same *prejudices* are still industriously spread against it; as they can surely serve no other purpose than that of perplexing the cause by studied delays, and casting a veil of uncertainty and doubt upon subjects wherein the Public seemed already to have received the compleatest satisfaction.

VII. IT is asserted, that the natural stock of water, which appertains to the country through which the Canal is designed to pass, is at present consumed by the mills and other works already erected: And, therefore, that whatever water the new Canal requires, must, some how or other, be drawn from that stock, which does but barely supply their present calls.

*Answ.* THIS is a difficulty which must be cleared up by the evidence which will be produced at the bar. It will then plainly appear, that the water which now runs to waste, is equal to, if not in much greater quantities, *than* that which is now consumed; and that the mills are often prevented from working by the sudden floods of water which swell the brooks. Were this even not the case, the restrictive clauses in the Bill are more than sufficient *to* remove every possible alarm that can reasonably be suggested in this regard.

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THE substance of whatever has been advanced in the several *Petitions* lately presented to the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, and, particularly, in that which has been sent up by the Proprietors of the *Staffordshire Canal*, has been so fully answered in the short pamphlet, entitled "A Few Remarks, &c. respecting the intended *Worcester Canal*," that all further notice of them would be justly deemed superfluous and trifling.

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A BRIEF  
*R E P L Y*  
TO THE SEVERAL  
OBJECTIONS, &c.